

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: FEDERAL PROGRAMS - OFA & ETA

DATE: JANUARY 30, 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
 VANNESS
 MASON
 GERAGHTY

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR GIRARD

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING OFFICE FOR THE AGING:

CANDACE KELLY, DIRECTOR

DEBORAH COALTS, NUTRITION COORDINATOR

REPRESENTING THE EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING ADMIN.:

WILLIAM RESSE, DIRECTOR

JOAN PARSONS, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE
AND FISCAL SERVICES

JOAN SADY, CLERK

SUPERVISOR F. THOMAS

HAL PAYNE, ADMINISTRATOR - WESTMOUNT HEALTH
FACILITY

AMANDA ALLEN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Bentley called the meeting of the Federal Programs Committee to order at 11:36 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2006 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to William Resse, Director of the Employment & Training Administration, who distributed copies of his agenda to the Committee, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Resse explained that his agenda consisted of only one item which was a request for authorization to execute an interagency agreement with NYSDOL (New York State Department of Labor), for the exchange of confidential information through REOS (Re-Employment Operating System) in a form approved by the County Attorney. He added that NYSDOL required services provided through WIA (Workforce Investment Agency), and the State employment services at local one-stop centers be integrated and further, required that unemployment insurance customers be provided services through a functionally aligned system. Mr. Resse noted that NYSDOL would also require agencies and individual staff to sign confidentiality agreements prior to allowing access to the NYSDOL scheduling and case management system for unemployment insurance customers.

Mr. VanNess asked if the signing of the confidentiality agreement would become an employment requirement for all Employment & Training Administration staff involved in this process. Mr. Resse replied that Paul Dusek, County Attorney, had suggested the situation be discussed with the CSEA (Civil Service Employees Association Inc.) union prior to enforcing any such requirement. Mr. Resse

advised that he was still in the process of researching the scope of involvement this process would require of his staff.

Mr. VanNess expressed that he had recently heard of a very difficult situation an acquaintance had experienced with NYSDOL. He said that he wanted to be sure the County was not inheriting any negative issues from NYSDOL by instituting this new process. Mr. Resse stated that he agreed wholeheartedly with Mr. VanNess' aspect; he added that thus far, the Employment & Training Administration had maintained the 'good guy' role in the unemployment process, and he wished to keep it that way. Mr. Resse advised that he had expressed these concerns to NYSDOL during a recent demonstration of the new process.

Mr. Geraghty asked what types of confidential information the Employment & Training Administration staff would be privy to under this new system and Mr. Resse replied that his staff would have the ability to access information pertaining to unemployment claims and status. He noted that he had not viewed the full nature of the information available; however, Mr. Resse advised, the demonstration he had attended reflected that his staff would have the ability to schedule appointments and also to enter comments as to whether the applicant seemed able to work. Mr. VanNess asked if the Employment & Training Administration employees would be responsible for determining if applicants were unable to perform a job based on stress levels or disability and Mr. Resse replied in the negative. He explained that the new system would simply allow his staff to comment on their experiences with the unemployment insurance applicants; notes, such as whether an applicant had attended a scheduled appointment, or if not for what reason, would be entered for consideration by NYSDOL in processing claims. The Employment & Training Administration staff would make no determination of benefits paid or job placement, Mr. Resse added.

Mr. Mason asked Mr. Resse how he felt about his Department using the NYSDOL system and Mr. Resse replied that he felt they would probably require access to the system for noting workshop attendance and such; however, he added, he did not intend for his Department to become a policing agent for NYSDOL. Mr. Resse stated that he did have some issues with the prospect of his Department becoming involved in the unemployment process to the extent that their comments might affect an individual's claim. He noted that they would have to be very careful in determining the level of participation they wished to implement in this program, as it might have negative effects in the future.

Mr. Geraghty asked if the system would allow access to medical records and Mr. Resse advised that it would not. He added that the NYSDOL system would simply allow his staff to enter comments into the system documenting their direct dealings with an unemployment applicant. Mr. Resse reiterated that his staff would have absolutely no access to any medical records; however, the claim details would be accessible.

Discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously to authorize the execution of an interagency agreement with NYSDOL for the exchange of confidential information through the Re-Employment Operating System (REOS), in a form approved by the County Attorney, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Resse apprised that in recent weeks his Department, in conjunction with Washington County, Saratoga County, NYSDOL and BOCES (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services), had coordinated a mailing to over 2,000 individuals to aid in identifying adult job seekers lacking a GED (General Education Diploma). He noted that this mailing advertised the services offered by both the Employment & Training Administration and BOCES for GED achievement. Mr. Resse said that as a result of the mailing they had already received twenty applicants for related services.

Mr. Mason asked if there were still funds available for the GED program and Mr. Resse advised that funding was available for the program through the end of the fiscal year, which was June 30, 2007. Mr. Mason stated that lack of transportation seemed to be a major issue in the GED program attendance level and Mr. Resse apprised that prior to Mr. Mason's joining the Committee, the decision had been made to discontinue transportation and use that funding to facilitate additional enrollees in the program. Mr. Mason asked how the supply of enrollees for the GED and Crew programs were determined and Mr. Resse replied that the bulk of the applicants were recruited with the help of local High Schools.

Discussion ensued.

In closing, Mr. Resse advised that he had been working closely with Robert Metthe, Information Technology Director, and NYSDOL with regard to the phone system options available. Due to the current system being outdated, Mr. Resse explained, NYSDOL was seriously considering contributing to the cost of a new telephone system prior to moving into the new Health and Human Services Building, once constructed.

As there was no further business with respect to the Employment & Training Administration, privilege of the floor was extended to Candace Kelly, Director of the Office for the Aging, who distributed copies of her agenda to the Committee; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Kelly apprised that the first item listed on her agenda was a request to appoint members of the Warren-Hamilton Counties Office for the Aging Advisory Council for 2007. She thanked Hal Payne, Administrator of the Westmount Health Facility, for his involvement with the Council and noted that he was more than welcome to continue to attend future Council meetings once promoted to Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services. Mrs. Kelly stated that the position filled by Mr. Payne had been left vacant in the event that his replacement should like to become a member of the Advisory Council. The Warrensburg representative had been removed from the Advisory Council for lack of attendance at Council meetings, Mrs. Kelly apprised, and she asked Mr. Geraghty

to keep this opening in mind in the event that he knew of someone who might like the appointment. Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously to approve the request to appoint members of the Warren-Hamilton Counties Office for the Aging Advisory Council as presented and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 16th Board meeting; *a copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Kelly reminded the Committee members that the Youth Bureau had recently moved from their offices within the Municipal Center to share the space occupied by the Office for the Aging at the CNA Building. She noted that she felt the combination of the two offices would lead to a positive working relationship where programs might be developed to collaborate the younger and older members of both groups. Mrs. Kelly stated that the only problem with the move so far had been that the CNA Building management had refused to place the Youth Bureau on the building's directory due to the fact that the Youth Bureau was not listed on the leasing agreement. Mrs. Kelly said that she had contacted Paul Dusek, County Attorney, with respect to this matter and he was researching the agreement to see what could be done to appease the Youth Bureau's request.

In addition to the ongoing issues with the Cedars mealsite, Mrs. Kelly apprised that a new problem had arisen in the form of a gas leak in the mealsite's kitchen. She explained that during the prior week the Cedars management had discovered a gas leak from one of the kitchen stoves and they had in turn contacted a member of the Office for the Aging staff to report the problem. Mrs. Kelly said that the staff member had reported to the mealsite as per the Cedars management's request, then requested overtime pay, which was denied. Mrs. Kelly stated that because the Office for the Aging was simply a tenant of the Cedars, they should not be responsible for the leak in any way and their staff should not have been contacted to deal with the issue. She noted that she had voiced this opinion to the Cedars' management and had in return been told that she was being difficult in not dealing with the problem. Mrs. Kelly advised that this issue was also in Mr. Dusek's hands, as she was not sure of the legality of issue.

Mr. Geraghty advised that in this instance, the fire department should have been called immediately and National Grid thereafter, rather than contacting the Office for the Aging staff. Mrs. Kelly agreed with Mr. Geraghty's statement and added that although these steps were taken, the Cedar's management had still insisted that a member of her staff be present.

Included in the agenda, Mrs. Kelly advised, was a copy of the February 2007 Warren/Hamilton Counties Office for the Aging Newsletter. She noted that Rose Hammond, who she believed was the oldest resident of Warren County, had turned 105 recently and an article was included in the newsletter celebrating her long life and accomplishments. Mrs. Kelly advised that she had attended a birthday party thrown for this extraordinary woman who, she noted, still had all her wits about her despite her advanced age. Mrs. Kelly stated that several area newspapers had also attended the event and there should be additional articles forthcoming with respect to Mrs. Hammond.

Mrs. Kelly introduced Deborah Coalts, Nutrition Coordinator, to discuss the 2006 Nutrition Report, *a copy of which is on file with the minutes.* Ms. Coalts apprised that overall, they had served more meals than average, despite a slight decrease in congregate numbers. She noted that the average numbers

for congregate meals had decreased state-wide because of the increasing trend for seniors to remain in the workforce for a prolonged period, thereby decreasing the number of attendees available for the lunch meals.

Ms. Coalts stated that the number of delivered meals had increased overall by approximately 30 per day. She added that the number of meals served per day at the Cedars' mealsite had increased by approximately 16, while the Warrensburg site had seen an increase of 13 per day.

Although there had been a very slight increase in the amount contributed by attendees of the mealsites, the 2007 Budget would be very difficult to maintain, Mrs. Coalts stated. In order to remain as close to the available funds as possible, Mrs. Coalts advised that requests had been made for the Dietician to include as many low cost meals as possible on the mealsite menus.

Mrs. Kelly apprised that one of the authorities of the Advisory Council was to re-evaluate the recommended meal contribution periodically, as they saw fit. She said that currently the suggested amount was \$2.00 per meal and they were considering raising the amount to \$2.50 per meal. Mrs. Kelly noted that she was hesitant to see the amount increased because in many cases they did not receive the suggested amount as it was and she feared that the increase might deter those who needed the meals from turning to the mealsite for sustenance. In order to avoid this from happening, Mrs. Kelly said that if the suggested cost were raised, she and her staff would personally visit each site to explain the need for the increase.

In closing, Mrs. Kelly advised that she had met with Mr. F. Thomas to discuss the possibility of using a volunteer from the Lake Luzerne mealsite to deliver meals in the Stony Creek area. She said that Mr. F. Thomas was assisting the Office for the Aging in developing a survey to determine the interest in the program, and added that additional coolers might be needed to facilitate the expansion if applied.

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, on motion made by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. Merlino, Mr. Bentley adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist